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SPORTS

Winchester High girls soccer proves staying together as a family is the recipe for success

JOE MCCONNELL | SPORTS EDITOR

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Sophie Shapiro, the leading scorer on this year's Winchester High girls soccer team, celebrates with teammates Ashley Mitchell (22), Amanda Mitchell (12) and Emma Kiernan after scoring a goal during a game last month. Shapiro finished up with 12 goals and 13 assists. COURTESY PHOTO/SARAH MALCOLM

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In a season that started with an alleged roster controversy, the W High girls soccer team (14-2-2) rose above all of the off-field noise to finish

seventh in the state, according to the final Division 1 power rankings prior to the playoffs.

The Red & Black then went on to beat visiting Beverly in the Round of 32, 3-2 in double overtime to advance to the Sweet 16, where they lost a close bitter battle to visiting Concord-Carlisle, the 10th seed, 1-0.

Following that win, the Patriots made it all the way to the state semifinal game, only to lose to Franklin, the sixth seed, 2-0. Franklin will now play for the Division 1 state championship against Natick, the fourth seed, at Leominster's Doyle Field on Saturday, Nov. 22, starting 10 a.m.

But a quick analysis of the postseason, power rankings serve only one purpose, and that's to determine the state's best teams, not necessarily in any particular order. This year, in Division 1, the fourth seeded team is facing the 10th seeded team for the state title, which certainly doesn't diminish what the other Top 10 teams did this fall, and that includes the Winchester girls, who did their share of dominating games on the pitch in 2025 as the stats would indicate in this wrap-up story.

Coach Michelle Ross understands how good her team was, despite the distractions that they had to face, and she knows it's only going to be the start of many more successes over the next few years.

Ross really enjoyed this season, and the resolve that her players consistently showed in every game, while offering her thoughts.

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"Looking back on the season, this team faced a lot of adversity both on and off the field. On the pitch, we had a few players who suffered fro recurring injuries, but thanks to the strength of our bench, we pe she said. "But overall, the captains set the tone for the season before

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anyone even stepped on the field for preseason practice. It was team-first (all the time with them) that quickly developed into the unwavering support for one another.

"The returnees also helped cement this philosophy by bonding with their new teammates, while making sure everyone felt included, and somebody was listening to them," she continued. "I couldn't be prouder of these players for overcoming all the challenges on and off the pitch, which they did with resilience, grace, a strong team mentality and a genuine love for each other."

Their actions on the pitch then demonstrated how much they cared for each other after scoring an astounding 54 goals this year, while giving up just 15.

Sophie Shapiro led her teammates in goals with 12. Emma Kiernan was next in line with eight. Ashley Mitchell chipped in with six. Lilly Ossen and Audrey Houllahan tallied five apiece.

Shapiro was also the assist leader with 13. Mitchell setup eight scores, and was followed by Juliet Semmes with five helpers.

But scoring goals and winning games was not as important as being together with one another this fall.

"Losing to Concord-Carlisle went beyond the fact that we were eliminated from the state tournament," Ross said. "As much as that final game stung, the loss really meant that we will no longer be together every day as a family, and that alone brought the tears. That's the biggest void for all of us to overcome right now."

Joe McConnell is a longtime, award-winning sports editor for numerous Shore publications. He began covering Winchester sports for the News last

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November.

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Winchester boys basketball heads to Bridgewater-Raynham for Sweet 16 game after beating Lexington in postseason opener

It was the third meeting this year between Middlesex League boys basketball rivals Lexington (16-5, 11th seed) and Winchester (17-4, 22nd seed). They split the first two during the regular season, thus making this Round of 32 postseason matchup the impromptu rubber game of this year's series, with the

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SPORTS

Winchester wrestling enjoys Top 10 finish at state divisional meet; senior captains move on to All-States

After the Winchester High qualified wrestlers competed hard over two days last weekend (Feb. 20, 21) in the State Division 1 Meet at North Andover High School, Mother Nature gave them a break to rest and recuperate with Monday's blizzard that resulted in two days off from school. There

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Winchester boys hockey advances to the Sweet 16 after beating Wachusett in the tournament opener

The Winchester High boys hockey team (12-9-2), the 17th seed, edged the 16th-seeded Wachusett Regional Mountaineers (18-2-1), 5-4 in a Round of 32 Division 1 state tournament game at Westborough's Northstar Ice Arena on Feb. 25. The Red & Black will now take on top seed Catholic Memorial (18-2-1)

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SPORTS

With postseason starting Friday night, WHS boys hoop seniors English, Sarpong, Burbine join Middlesex League elite

The Winchester High boys basketball team, the 22nd seed, will take on Middlesex League rival Lexington, the 11th seed, to begin the Division 1 state tournament in the Round of 32 on Friday night, Feb. 27, starting at 6 p.m. These teams are so evenly matched, beginning with the

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EVENTS

‘Chicago: Teen Edition’ dances onto the Winchester High School stage

By Talia Ho | Correspondent Fame. Fortune. And all that jazz. This spring, Winchester High School presents “Chicago: Teen Edition,” a bold musical that explores celebrity culture, media manipulation, and the cost of ambition. Set in the 1920s, this iconic production is sure to leave the audience wanting more. Performances will

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS
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Ripley Chapel in Winchester presents ‘Syldason: You Are Welcome Here’

The following was submitted by the Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church: On Friday, March 13, beginning at 7:30 p.m., live in-person and live streamed from the stunning Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church, Winchester, 21 Church St., join in with Syldason, a duo concert featuring Sylvie Zakarian,

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NEWS

Rep. Michael Day helps House colleagues pass sweeping energy affordability bill

The following was submitted by the Office of Rep. Michael S. Day: Rep. Michael S. Day and his colleagues in the House of Representatives recently passed energy affordability legislation that would result in over $9 billion in savings for utility ratepayers over the next 10 years. The bill maintains critical

March 4, 2026

NEWS

Winchester gun owners face new training rules starting April 2

Public safety data How Winchester compares on firearms licenses in comparable Massachusetts communities Active licenses as of Jan. 25, 2025 — Source: Massachusetts Criminal History Systems Board License to carry firearms Firearms identification card Winchester and Marblehead are the focus communities. Peers selected based on comparable population size, demographics and suburban

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